1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

was at the same time the wife of his brother. But when a son-in-law gave personal offense to a parent-in-law, it was possible to order dissolution of the marriage.

Case 17. Murder of Sister-in-law: Lost vs. his nephews
Informant: Post Oak Jim

"Once some white men caught some Indians and held them prisoners. Those that were left were short of food. There was a Mexican captive who went to a girl and said that if he could get a horse he'd buy something for them to eat with it. He wanted to take the best horse. The girl bawled him out. 'There are plenty of horses, and I don't want to take the best.' She said she didn't want to give it to this crazy Mexican. After that he wanted to make up again, but they sent him off. He was interpreter for the Indians at that time.

"The Mexican went up to his wife. He wanted to know where his bow and arrows were. He took them and went up to the woman who owned the horse and killed her. Four of her sons were gone. After she died, her people cried and cried, and buried her out on the prairie. All the rest of the Indians had it in for the Mexican, but they didn't know what to do about it. The Mexican was a medicine man and a war chief. The four boys got back. The others were crying for the dead mother. The boys told them to be quiet for a while. They said they were not going to cry until they finished everything. The Mexican's wife told him his nephews were back. His wife was the dead woman's sister. The sons did not eat. They got several men, and told them what they were going to do.

" 'We're just going to keep still about it for awhile. We'll find out all about it. This man is a medicine man, and we'll try to take away his medicine. Early in the morning we'll pack up and leave.' In the morning the men and the four boys got their guns and got ready to start.

"The Mexican had his horse tied up. There were eight men with the boys. The Mexican untied his horse, saying, 'They won't come.'

"His wife was all anxious and nervous. She said, 'Lost, what are you going to do? Your nephews are coming.'

"He said, 'I've no need to be on horseback to fight them. They are just like women.'

"They came around the tipi, calling, 'Come out, you are nothing but a coward.' As soon as he came out one of them shot him, and they went on. His wife didn't know what to do. He was dying; blood was just pouring out. There was one medicine man there, but he didn't have much power. The following evening he was doctoring Lost, but he died. The wife came down to camp the next morning. Nobody did anything to the boys. They had it in for him, killed him, and that was all. Lots of people were glad. He was real mean. Chew Up was the man who killed him."

It is not likely in this instance that the fact of Lost's being a captive laid him open to attack where a full-blooded Comanche would not have been.

1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

"When he came home after the smoking was done, he found two people in the bed. One was his wife, and the other a young brave. The brave asked the pardon of the medicine man. What could he do? He was in the uncomfortable circumstances of being unable to separate from his paramour. He wildly offered the husband anything that might be required for his release.

"The husband turned on his heel and went outside. He got a switch. With this in his hand he entered the tipi again and gave the lovers a thorough dusting. After a while he wanted to go to bed. But the pair was still lying there, unable to get loose. So, calling on another of his wives, the medicine man ordered her to help him drag the luckless lovers outside the tipi. He pulling on the man, the wife upon the woman, they dumped the couple on the ground and left them.

"When morning came the parents of the young brave were about to move camp and became concerned with their boy's absence. Scouring through the camp to find him, they came upon their youth—attached still to the woman just as the irate husband had left them. Seeing this, the boy's father went to the medicine man and begged him to set the youth free.

"The husband refused. He said he loved his wife and he wanted her to get enough of it.

"Finding his own entreaties of no avail, the father went to some warriors of great influence and begged them to intercede. They went to the medicine man and offered him anything he might want to withdraw the charm. After this representation the medicine man consented; he went into the tipi and pulled the arrow out from under the bed. With this the pair got loose from each other.

"The father of the youth paid heavy damages to the medicine man, and that settled that part of the case.

"Then the father of the guilty wife came to plead for his daughter, that she wouldn't get cut up or killed by her husband. He offered his son-in-law gifts and begged him not to hurt his child. He suggested that since she was guilty, it would be well to make her the slave of the other two wives, but he would not like to see her injured. The medicine man refused the gift from his father-in-law, but agreed to keep the woman, though she could no longer be his favorite wife. Thereafter she had to be a slave in his household to her younger sisters."

Here is a father begging his son-in-law not to harm his daughter. Propitiatory gifts are offered! As was noted in the discussion of murder, the title to a woman passed completely to the husband on marriage. That he refused the gift and yet observed the father's wish seems merely to indicate the nobility of the husband in the case.

ORDEAL

Conditional curse is closely akin to ordeal. In view of the wide spread of ordeal in the Old World and its peculiar usefulness in law, its general neglect by the American Indians is unique. Yet neglect need not mean

alone to the small camp of related individuals forming a composite extended family to a large group of several hundred people. But the band was not organized around a family group, nor was it the basis for the regulation of marriage. Clan organization was wholly absent. In the large groups, more often than not marriage took place within the band so that a couple belonged customarily to the same band as both their parents. But in cases of interband marriage, residence tended to be virilocal, for a band did not want to lose its fighting strength to another, and in personal disputes a man had to count on the support of his brothers, wherefore brothers stuck together in their parental band. This being so, and a son-in-law being expected to furnish food to his wife's parents, they, in giving consent to marriage, preferred their daughters to take a husband from their own band. Yet the kinship principle was weak, even within the extended family band; for although groups of relatives tended to camp together, the linkage of the person to the band was on the basis of free association. Any person could withdraw from one band and join another at will.[9] There were no restrictions to prevent a change of residence from one band to another at any time, and no formal ceremony was required. With a great deal of interband visiting going on, temporary changes of band membership were frequent. A newcomer simply moved in, and no permission was necessary.

Likewise, groups of individuals under their own leaders sometimes separated from the main band, possibly to reunite later or to join some other band. Such divisions sometimes gave rise to new bands if these cessionists stayed off on their own. In several known instances, smaller or weaker bands merged with larger bands and lost their identity.

In the large band, relatives tended to camp together. Thus the camp pattern retained a degree of regularity. And when the band was subdivided, as was often the case, there is reason to believe that the break-up tended to be into the smaller groups of relatives joined by the families of friends drawn within the orbit of the group.

The family headmen—and there was at least one for each group—

[9] David G. Burnet, "American Aborigines, Indians of Texas," *The Cincinnati Literary Gazette*, Vol. I (May 15, 1824), 154; E. A. Hoebel, "Comanche and Hekandika Shoshone Relationship Systems," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLI (1939), 440–57, has a similar analysis of the Comanche band.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

587 brother's daughter naturally belongs to the same clan as her father's sister. Such marriages are nothing more than the extension of the sororate to a lower generation and, like the levirate and sororate, they function to keep the bond between two families or marriage groups firm when one of the links has been snapped. In at least one Comanche instance, recounted by Slope, such a marriage was made for this explicit reason. The widowed husband was said to be a very good man, and his brother-in-law wanted to keep him in the family. As he had no other sister, he gave him his daughter instead. Previously, the widower had been his *haints* and they had joked as brothers-in-law do. Now brother-in-law had become son-in-law to his friend, and they both changed their behavior and address terms to the more circumspect relation required of son-in-law and father-in-law.

582 682 Avowedly a man could also marry his stepdaughter, but we have no examples of such marriages. So, too, he could marry his stepmother when his father died, but not his real mother. In the heinous case of attempted parricide of Old Buffalo, who had three wives, his son and grandson shot him and ran off with the two wives from whom they were not descended. They were ostracized ("people didn't like it") and had to live on the edge of the camp, but not so much for marrying the stepmothers as for their attempt on the life of their father and grandfather.[19]

582 591 Marriages between persons of any degree of recognized genetic relationship were absolutely forbidden. Most marriages took place within the band; hence, a couple lived customarily in the same group as their parents. The groom brought his wife to his private lodge, which was set near that of his parents, and there they were likely to live until a growing family made a larger dwelling necessary. Since residence in inter-band marriages was more often virilocal (residence in the locale of the husband), children usually belonged to the band of the father. When, however, a man took a first wife from another tribe, he generally went to live with her, since his own tribe held him in light esteem afterwards.

● 606 The bride's mother with other relatives and friends of the couple ordinarily helped the couple get started housekeeping. She helped make much of the furnishings and possibly a new tipi. There was no

[19] Informant: She Invites Her Relatives.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

mother-in-law tabu in Comanche society, probably because of the old Shoshonean system of pseudo cross-cousin marriages in which a boy married the step-daughter of his father's sister, thus equating mother-in-law with paternal aunt. The absence of the avoidance practice is entirely sensible, since a boy had been accustomed to treating his mother-in-law as a preferred aunt. The same relationship held for a girl and her father-in-law. The Comanches had given up the pseudo cross-cousin marriages, but the terminology and its accompanying attitudes carried on. This patterns of social conduct was quite in contrast with that of some of the other Plains tribes. Among the Cheyennes, who were neighbors of the Comanches, for example, a man never spoke to, or knowingly went near, his mother-in-law until late in life when he had presented her with a war trophy. A Comanche mother-in-law could talk or even joke with her son-in-law, although extreme familiarity was carefully avoided. The normal pattern in Comanche society was that a son-in-law should respect and help his mother-in-law. In case of an attack on the camp, a son-in-law was expected to protect his mother-in-law. In case he failed to do so, the sympathy of the group was with the abandoned mother-in-law, who could order her daughter to leave him, as in the case of the woman whose son-in-law refused to give her his horse when they were being chased by the Tonkawas. "When we get home, you don't live with my daughter any longer," was her dictum. A hunter felt obligated to share his game with his wife's parents. A father-in-law had the privilege of ordering the dissolution of a marriage when the son-in-law gave personal offense to either parent-in-law.

In polygynous families many of the secondary wives were captives whose lot in the household was that of "chore wives," helpers to the first wife. If the wives were all sisters, the oldest one usually continued as "boss," even as she had among her sisters before her marriage. This fact explains why the Comanches thought sisters made better multiple wives. There was less possibility of friction developing because a younger wife challenged the supremacy of an older one. One wife was always favored and was free to be her husband's constant companion. She was called the *paraiβo,* "chief" wife. The favored wife usually escaped much of the hard labor and drudgery which fell to the lot of other wives. She carried her husband's shield

9: Gladwin E-5 (1940) 1948 NO6 Comanche NO6

very clear. It is apparently a "slang" word which has come into more and more common usage in late years. Most of the old people object to its wide use, and there are few young people who do not recognize that the other forms are more proper, even if they seldom use them. In the old days it was often customary for a young man (especially if a captive) who wished to marry a girl and who approached her brother with gifts, to call him *nĭmĭ²ara²*, and thus formally admit his desire for the man's sister. As a brave warrior presumably would not have to resort to this somewhat demeaning method of getting a wife, the use of the term is looked upon as being particularly unfortunate by some of the older people. Related to this marriage custom is the use of the term by two friends who cooperated in obtaining women for each other for non-marital purposes. These "sweetheart"-liaisons were apt to last for some time, and the women involved often called each other *nĭmĭ²ára²* also, as well as the more correct sister terms. This seems to be the only possible basis for women's present use of the word, but it is rather tenuous, and certainly "incorrect," even here. While in the marriage situation above the use of the term might be continued for some time between the men concerned, if one of them attained any marked prestige, it was always dropped in favor of the proper usage. The use of the term was somewhat correlated with band membership.

Parents-in-law. There is no mother-in-law tabu among the Comanche, though the general patterns of respect due the parents' generation, and a certain amount of avoidance of overly sexual topics of conversation are proper in dealing with the parents-in-law.

There is such very wide variation in relations with parents-in-law, depending on personality, residence and by whom the marriage was arranged that it is difficult to formulate any all-inclusive statements on the subject. Thus we have cases in which the boy's mother bluntly tells his new wife that they don't like her and don't want her, while others say that a girl's relations with her mother-in-law are among the closest of any, as was the case in TY's first marriage.

In the fairly frequent case of the girl's marriage being arranged by her family, the son-in-law moves in to live with or near them, and relations are generally pretty close, at least superficially. Not only have personality factors already been considered, but it is in the interest of the parents to keep their daughter's husband satisfied, and hence working for them, while he is aware that they can break up the marriage if his behavior is unsatisfactory. Also, he usually hopes to get a second daughter as a wife if he pleases his in-laws. Thus, if there is an argument, they will usually intercede on the boy's side if this is reasonable in the situation. While living together, the boy tends his father-in-law's stock and receives some in return; in the old days, he used also to herd the horses and bring his mother-in-law meat and hides, while she made him especially nice clothes. After two or three years, the husband often had accumulated enough property, either as gifts from his in-laws or through his own

9: Gladwin E-5 (1940) 1948 NO6 Comanche NO6

606 efforts at raiding and such, to move away and set up for himself. In this case his wife's mother, if she were widowed, often came along to live with them; sometimes both the wife's parents lived in a tipi nearby.

Relations with parents-in-law are very incompletely defined in the many other less formal marriage set-ups, and it is not profitable to attempt to generalize upon them, except perhaps to say that a modified form of the above was usually the desideratum. There is no feeling that the parents of the two spouses should be especially friendly to each other or the reverse; this also depends primarily on the circumstances. As noted above, the terminology does not recognize any relationship between them.

603 [591] [576] *Grandparents.* A parent-in-law is a very short way from being a grandparent, and many of the factors operative in one relationship affect the other. Thus the comparatively frequent matrilocal residence is reflected in the fact that it is the maternal grandparents who are considered the closest; we have seen above that a person wishing to be respectful to a stranger always addresses him as a maternal grandfather. This term is also applied to treasured inanimate objects, and even to parts of the body. It is thus not surprising that children are said to learn the words for maternal grandparents before those for the paternal ones.

Often the grandmothers' most important function is caring for their children's smaller children (see p. 86). Thus TY received a great deal of attention and instruction from both her grandmothers, and especially from her mother's mother, until they died, and even felt them to be more of a factor in her life at this time than her own mother. When a married daughter moved away after a few years of amicable matrilocal residence, her mother sometimes kept one of the children of whom she was especially fond to bring up herself; this child then usually called her mother.

Joking with grandparents is usually confined to the maternal ones, and is not carried on after the children reach maturity. As mentioned in the preceding section, some inappropriate relationship is pretended, and jokes are made in terms of the behavior expected of such a relationship. The children may call them by parent-in-law terms; the girls are then berated about being seen with various boys, usually ones they particularly dislike, the boys are told to do odd jobs for their "in-laws," and so on. Or they may reciprocally use various combinations of sibling and sibling-in-law terms, leading to *hâipia* jokes, though apparently without the physical aspects. The grandchildren may even put the grandparents into the children's generation, with appropriate comments, or reverse such affectionate terms as "my dear little ones" which the grandparents usually apply to them. A widowed grandmother may also be teased about various older men in the community, though usually not if she actually has a particular liking for any of them.

Relations with great-grandparents are slight, since, when this relationship

22: Dacus Q-3 (no date) 1960 NO6 Comanche NO6
(ca. 1870)

584 unfrequently the talons and beaks of the prairie eagles and falcons, a breast-
301 plate of "hair pipe," and perhaps a few bright plates of metal cut into the
291 form of crosses and crescents and sewed to his gorgeously colored suit of
237 dressed skins. So attired, with his face sometimes painted brown, or blue,
584 and at other times flaming in vermillion colors, or yellow as the victims
302 of "the plague of the Indies," the Comanche beau mounts his pony and proceeds to the lodge of his inamorata, dismounts, and, if the maiden comes and hitches his pony, enters and squats upon the ground; and displays his discontent with his lot by responding to every inquiry with a most dolorous
584 "Ugh! Ugh!" After manifesting his misery to an extent deemed sufficient, the Comanche young gentleman rises with great dignity, and repeating two or three knell-like "Ugh! Ughs!" he remounts and rides off without so much as deigning to utter a word. If the maiden he desires to woo does not take charge of his pony, that ends the courtship. He would despise himself and be the fool of the tribe to persist under such circumstances.

An account of this visit is carefully certified to the master of the lodge, on his return. Our dandy, like many civilized gallants, is always very careful to make his initiatory visit when paterfamilias is not at home. The way is now open for further negotiations. The girl is not usually again consulted. The young dandy has merely condescended to indicate his preference for her. She of course must be delighted. If the father is a chief or
584 principal man in the tribe, he provides a dower for the daughter. The
583 young suitor must be able to respond in equal measure in the way of presents of this world's goods. Sometimes a Comanche belle may have, as a portion, as many as fifty ponies. The suitor in such case should be prepared to turn over fifty-one ponies as a present to his would be father-in-law.
[585] If this can be done, a bargain is usually concluded. No further ceremony is necessary. The maiden and her fifty ponies become the absolute property of the young man. He has "swapped" fifty-one ponies for fifty ponies and got a wife, or rather slave, into the bargain.

585 When negotiations have been concluded, the dandy proceeds to the lodge of his bride, but not in the same plight as before. He enters, throws down his deer skin mantle, casts from him his weapons, and then orders the bride to enter upon her duties as a wife and slave by taking them up and proceeding to follow him to his own lodge, bearing the burdens he has thrown down for her.

[595] The bride may have three or four sisters, and they may all be wives of her husband before the expiration of a week. Mothers-in-law excite
606 little feeling, either of favor or aversion, among the Comanches. They play
585 a minor part in the affairs of the newly constituted households.

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

648 government and the several interested tribes, which finally resulted in
657 the opening of the Comanche, Kiowa, and Caddo reservations to white homesteading. Many Indian leaders protested the agreement after their own interpreters had explained it to them. They maintained that Joshua Given (the same one mentioned in one of the letters to General Pratt at Carlisle), who was the son of the deceased Kiowa Chief Satank, had translated their demands to the commission inaccurately and had falsely represented what the written agreement contained.

648 In great rage, the Indian leaders made medicine to bring about
754 Joshua Given's death, as well as the demise of the commissioners. Mak-
657 ing an image to represent Given, they threw mud at it. The fatal seizure would take hold where the mud hit the image. The mud struck the image in the chest. On his way home from the council, Joshua Given was stricken by a hemorrhage from the lungs, and shortly thereafter he died.

When old Indians told this story, they had the members of the commission following the young Kiowa in death. At any rate, history bears the old ones out as to the untimely death of Joshua Given.

648 Some of the Indian leaders decided to take their grievance to their
657 Great White Father in Washington. Choosing their own interpreter this time, they told their story to Grover Cleveland. President Cleveland assured them that their land would not be taken from them during his administration. Their trip delayed the opening of their land
648 for homesteads for nine years. But in 1901 the Jerome Agreement
723 was implemented. Each Indian then living was allowed an allotment
657 of 160 acres. This represented the Indian's individual share of the once great empire, Comanchería. The white man got the rest.

186 When they had had such experiences, the older Indians were bound to have certain suspicions of Charley Ross, with his numerous white man's ways, white man's language, and friendships with white
186 men. But he was devoted to the old fellows and had their respect. One
302 symbol of the links he kept with them was the braids he wore, even though he wore a hat and his hair was scanty. I remember having thought of the braids as affected. But finally age and observation taught me better. The older Indians all wore their hair in braids, and these were the people he must stay close to so that he could help them.

606 He had other bonds with the old fellows besides his braids. He had
[186] a wife who spoke no English. He was fulfilling a Comanche tradition
[191] by caring for his wife's parents. Mrs. Ross's father, Mi-he-suah, lived

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

in Charley's home, though his son To-pet-chy's home was only a short distance away, on the east side of West Cache Creek. And though a Jesus Man (Christian), he belonged to a native Baptist church.

I am sure I felt a bit of intellectual awe in the presence of Charley Ross, and this was renewed at our meetings over the years. Here was a man, it must be remembered, who was born into a stone-age culture that was without knowledge of the smelting of iron or any other metal, and without the skill to forge tools from metal already smelted. From the viewpoint of the white people of that time, the Comanches were murderers, rapists, home-burners, kidnappers of women and children, horse thieves, cattle thieves, and all-round savages. History justifies this opinion, but there is this saving grace for the Comanche: he was here first. The white man was the invader. The empire of Comanchería had been forged and was in existence more than eighty-five years before George Washington became president of the United States. From the ruins of this empire came Charley Ross, who first found a way to enter the white man's world and then set about softening the impact between the two races that events decreed should live side by side. Mrs. Cato wrote in a letter to me, "My father was a very intelligent man, above the average, and so very much interested in higher education for his race of people and his own children. Even though he himself did not receive full benefit of complete education, he had the mind of a college graduate."

What a man accomplishes during his lifetime does not complete his true measurement. One must also judge how well he has projected himself into the next generation by adding the accomplishments of his children. Charley Ross's son-in-law, Mr. Cato, has told me that at the end of the 1965-66 school year Charley's children and grandchildren had completed forty-seven years of teaching. Others, not teachers, hold responsible positions with railroads, oil companies, and hospitals.

I have emphasized Charley Ross's pleasant manners and ready smile. But there was no servility about him, nor did he ever attempt to please everyone at the cost of any sacrifice of principle. He was a positive character about whom I never heard a derogatory word, either from whites, many of whom were always looking for a flaw or chink in his armor of friendliness, or from his tribesmen, who tended to distrust any Indian who earned the friendship of white people. He went about his self-appointed task of being a catalyst for the two races with good will and common sense.